

# Gabriela Méndez

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I'm passionate about helping institutions create inclusive and engaging learning environments through thoughtful online education, course design, and technology integration. With more than 15 years of experience in COIL Virtual Exchange and instructional design, I specialize in fostering global connections and supporting educators as they bring meaningful virtual exchange opportunities to their students. My goal is to help institutions connect learners from diverse backgrounds, empowering them to collaborate, learn, and grow together in an interconnected world.

I've implemented COIL programs across Latin America, the U.S., Europe, Asia, and South Africa, contributing to initiatives recognized with the U21 Award (2022) and the IIE Heiskell Award (2024). I design practical frameworks and resources, including a COIL Call for Participation model, a privacy-focused technology selection guide, and a language acknowledgment that promotes multilingual communication and equity.

I have facilitated bilingual (Spanish/English) workshops throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa, including work supported by the U.S. State Department through the *Expanding and Embedding COIL Virtual Exchange at Honduran and Central American Universities initiative* (2021–2025).

## RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### Associate Director of COIL Initiatives

*University of Minnesota | Minneapolis, MN | Aug 2024 - July 2025*

- Led and support the development, coordination, and administration of COIL programs at the University of Minnesota, aligning with institutional goals and global engagement priorities.
- Collaborated with faculty, staff, and international partners to design and implement COIL initiatives, including revenue-generating programs and strategies to reduce participation barriers.
- Developed and executed strategies to enhance COIL program visibility and participation across all University of Minnesota campuses and external audiences, including recruitment and promotional efforts.
- Managed faculty and staff training, feedback, and continuous improvement processes to ensure effective program delivery and participant satisfaction.
- Engaged in professional development and represent COIL initiatives at conferences, contributing to global education and virtual exchange fields.
- Collaborated with and contributed to other initiatives within the Office of Curriculum Internationalization, supporting institutional internationalization efforts.

### COIL Assistant Director

*Florida International University | Miami, FL | Jul 2022 – Jul 2024*

- Guided COIL Virtual Exchange initiatives, fostering global collaborations with FIU and international partners.
- Designed and delivered professional development for faculty to integrate COIL practices into their practice.
- Organized partnership events to build networks and enhance cross-cultural exchange.
- Collaborated with academic departments to align COIL initiatives with institutional goals, driving innovative course design.

- Supported faculty in implementing COIL projects, increasing student engagement and cross-cultural competencies.

#### **International Online Programs Coordinator**

*Tecnológico de Monterrey | Monterrey, MX | Feb 2017 – Jun 2022*

- Coordinated the **Global Classroom** initiative across 26 campuses, helping students connect with peers worldwide for collaborative learning.
- Built and maintained strong partnerships to grow virtual international programs, making cross-border learning accessible to more students.
- Developed resources and guides to support faculty in implementing international projects, promoting best practices in online collaboration.
- Monitored program outcomes and feedback to continuously improve the virtual exchange experience for both students and faculty.

#### **Part-Time Professor**

*Tecnológico de Monterrey | Monterrey, MX | Aug 2008 – Present*

- Teaching different courses from the School of Engineering and School of Education.
- Serving as an online tutor for undergraduate and graduate students, providing support and personalized guidance to ensure their success.

#### **Proctored Exam Coordinator**

*Tecnológico de Monterrey | Monterrey, MX | Jan 2013 – Feb 2017*

- Managed the logistics and organization of proctored exams for online graduate courses, ensuring a smooth and secure process.
- Developed efficient procedures for both in-person and virtual exams, streamlining operations and upholding academic standards.
- Trained staff and faculty on best practices for administering exams, ensuring consistency and compliance with institutional policies.
- Implemented digital tools to optimize exam scheduling and monitoring, reducing administrative workload and increasing efficiency.

## **SKILLS**

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- **COIL Program Development:** Designing and implementing international virtual exchange initiatives.
- **Strategic Planning:** Strong background in developing long-term strategies to promote growth and innovation within coil initiatives.
- **Faculty Support & Training:** Coaching faculty on course design, cross-cultural communication, and digital tools.
- **International Collaboration:** Building and sustaining global partnerships for cross-cultural learning.
- **Intercultural Communication:** Bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish, navigating diverse cultural contexts.
- **EdTech Evaluation & Integration:** Skilled in evaluating and implementing technology tools to enhance faculty and student experiences, particularly for COIL, fostering cross-cultural collaboration and engagement in virtual exchange programs.
- **Revenue-Generating Initiatives:** Managing professional development programs for international audiences.

- **Marketing & Promotion:** Social media management, content development, website management
- **Digital Collaboration Tools:** Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, Google Workspace, Canvas LMS
- **Instructional Design:** Universal Design for Learning (UDL), online course development, multimedia content creation
- **Data Management & Analysis:** Excel, Google Sheets, data visualization tools, survey platforms, tracking outcomes, and ensuring compliance with privacy standards (FERPA, GDPR).

## PROGRAM DESIGN & GLOBAL LEARNING INITIATIVES

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### **TRES Project – Transforming Learning through Reflection, Engagement, and Global Stewardship**

Co-Designer & Facilitator, 2026–2027 — Co-developed a professional learning initiative that brings together reflection, intercultural engagement, and global stewardship to support educators in creating more meaningful and human-centered learning experiences.

### **COIL Design & Facilitation Essentials Micro-Credential – University of Minnesota**

Learning Designer & Facilitator, 2025 — Designed and facilitated a global professional development workshop guiding educators through the step-by-step development of a COIL module plan. Developed a blended learning experience combining asynchronous Canvas modules, live Zoom sessions, experiential COIL collaboration, and international cohort networking, leading to a University of Minnesota micro-credential.

### **FIU COIL Design Workshop – Florida International University**

Co-Designer & Facilitator, 2023 — Co-designed and facilitated a six-module, 20-hour professional development experience guiding international faculty partners in developing COIL Module Plans for integration across undergraduate and graduate curricula and co-curricular activities. The blended workshop combined asynchronous learning, synchronous Zoom sessions, readings, and collaborative partner work.

## MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS TO COIL VIRTUAL EXCHANGE AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

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### **Manual for Virtual Interaction: Supporting Collaboration in International Projects Across European University Alliances**

Co-Author. Contributed expertise to the development of a practical guide for designing inclusive, democratic, and collaborative virtual spaces for international project collaboration. The manual includes pedagogical principles and technical guidance for virtual partner communities working across European University Alliances.

### **Book Review: *Perspectivas de la internacionalización en la educación superior en América Latina***

Published in the *Revista Internacional de Cooperación y Desarrollo*, 2026 — Authored a critical review examining internationalization in Latin American higher education, highlighting the importance of moving beyond generalized approaches and considering the region's diverse structural, geographical, cultural, and political contexts.

### **COIL Call for Participation**

Designed and implemented the process for a COIL Call for Participation at both Tecnológico de Monterrey and Florida International University, successfully attracting significant faculty engagement. This initiative streamlined faculty onboarding, increased program visibility, and facilitated the launch of numerous collaborative virtual exchange projects.

### **Language Acknowledgment**

This acknowledgment promotes linguistic diversity in COIL Virtual Exchange activities, encouraging participants to communicate authentically. It can be adapted to fit various contexts and is best presented in at least two languages.

### **Guide: How to Choose and Use Technology Tools for COIL with Data Privacy in Mind**

This guide helps select technology tools for COIL programs, focusing on data privacy and protection. It covers:

- **Choosing Secure Tools:** Selecting tools that comply with data protection regulations.
- **Understanding Data Regulations:** Adhering to GDPR, FERPA, etc.
- **Training:** Educating stakeholders on privacy and security in virtual exchanges.

## **EDUCATION**

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### **Tecnológico de Monterrey – Monterrey, Mexico**

Master's in Information Technology Management - Jan 2009 - Dec 2012

### **Tecnológico de Monterrey – San Luis Potosi, Mexico**

B.S. in Computer Systems Engineering - Aug 2001 - May 2006

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Bank of America Institute for Women's Entrepreneurship Certificate**

Instructor: Cornell University | Oct 2025

- Developed skills, knowledge and resources to build, manage, and scale a successful business.

### **Virtual Exchange Trainer & Facilitator**

Instructor: Global Teachers for a Sustainable Future (GTSF) | Oct 2025

- Developed expertise in designing, facilitating, and sustaining engaging, inclusive, and impactful virtual learning experiences.

### **COIL Design & Facilitation Essentials**

Instructor: University of Minnesota | Apr 2025

- Explored essential frameworks and strategies for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) design and facilitation, enhancing their skills to create engaging experiences.

### **Building Intercultural Viability™ in Organizations**

Instructor: Milton Bennett | Jul 2023

- Explored strategies for developing collective intercultural adaptability within organizations.

### **Advanced Techniques in Intercultural Competence**

Instructor: Darla Deardorff | Jul 2023

- Learned methods to foster global competence for deeper personal and professional transformation.

### **Virtual Exchange Leadership Institute**

Instructor: Stephanie Doscher | Mar 2019

- Participated in a comprehensive workshop focused on developing and scaling Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) programs, including strategies for building institutional support, creating effective COIL courses, and measuring their impact.

## **AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

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### **2024 IIE Heiskell Awards – Honorable Mention**

*Florida International University – COIL Capacity Building Program*

Part of the team recognized for advancing equitable and inclusive virtual exchange, engaging over 1,169 educators and connecting tens of thousands of students globally through COIL programs.

### **2022 U21 Award**

*Tecnológico de Monterrey – Global Classroom Team*

Contributed to the award-winning Global Classroom initiative, supporting faculty with training, partner collaboration, and activity design to foster intercultural learning and global partnerships.

## **CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION**

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### **IIE Network & CIP Reading Series 4: Mastering COIL and Virtual Partnerships**

- Panelist & Co-Author, August 2026 — Participated in an expert discussion on *Eight Stages of Faculty Partnership Building for COIL Coordinators*, sharing insights on intentional partnership development, institutional capacity building, and creative problem-solving in global education.

### **Seminario de Internacionalización – LATAM, UNIMINUTO Colombia**

- Speaker, August 2026 — Delivered the online session “*Global Citizenship Beyond Mobility: Rethinking Internationalization in Latin America*,” exploring more inclusive and meaningful approaches to internationalization in the Latin American higher education context.

### **Universidad Nacional Pedagógica Francisco Morazán (UPNFM)**

- Speaker, July 2026 — Facilitated a session on critical interculturality and virtual collaboration, engaging faculty from Honduras and colleagues from different countries in dialogue, reflection, and shared learning.

### **Seminario Nacional de Educación Superior Digital – Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí**

- Speaker, March 2026 — Presented “*Transformación institucional a través de la internacionalización del currículo y la cooperación académica*,” exploring how curriculum internationalization and academic collaboration can contribute to institutional transformation in higher education.

### **Global Teachers for a Sustainable Future Program (Erasmus+)**

- Keynote Speaker, Closing Ceremony, November 2025 — Delivered an inspirational keynote on global competence, intercultural collaboration, and sustainability-focused education to an audience of over 150 international education students and faculty.

### **IVEC International Virtual Exchange Conference**

- "Transcending Boundaries Through COIL" | 2017, Chicago, IL
- "OMIX: A Happy Coincidence to COIL" | 2018, New York, NY
- "Tec Global Classroom: Online Experiential Learning" | 2019, Tacoma, WA
- "Overcoming the Fear of Technology" | 2019, Tacoma, WA
- "Is There a Silver Bullet to Get Professors to Embrace Virtual Exchange?" | 2020, Online
- "Unraveling Professional Development for Virtual Exchange" | 2022, Valencia, Spain
- "COIL and LinkedIn: Building Bridges for Global Learning" | 2022, Valencia, Spain
- "Secret Sauce for Successful Partnerships" | 2023, São Paulo, Brazil
- "COIL Café: Building Social Capital Through Networking" | 2024, Online
- Interest Group Meeting – "A peer-driven approach in COIL Innovation: The 'Magic Makers' Experience for COIL Coordinators to Thrive in a Dynamic and Evolving Landscape" | 2025, Online

### **The Forum on Education Abroad**

- "Got COIL? Engaging Stakeholders in Virtual Exchange" | 2021, Online

### **Institute for the Future of Education Conference**

- "Modelo de Aula Multicultural Virtual" | 2017, Monterrey, MX
- "Online Collaboration as Internationalization Strategy" | 2018, Monterrey, MX
- "Global Classroom Workshop" | 2019-2020, Monterrey, MX

## **PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS AND COLLABORATIONS**

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### **The Magic-Makers. COIL VE Leaders**

- Informal international community of practioners who come together to exchange ideas, share experiences, and explore creative approaches to global learning and education. **Administrator & Community Co-Facilitator**; support the group's coordination and facilitate monthly community meetings.

### **COIL Connect**

- Member of the **COIL Working Group on Institutional Practices and Development**, contributing to the development of resources and research on **COIL recognition practices for faculty**, including how institutions acknowledge and value faculty contributions to COIL and virtual exchange.

### **Global Citizenship Alliance**

- Global Learning Consultant; contribute to program design, and learning initiatives global citizenship, intercultural learning, and internationalization. Support the development of the **TRES Project** and contribute to the **redesign and strategic development of GCA's website and digital presence**.

### **Mestenhauser Institute for International Competencies (MIIC)**

- Affiliated Expert; contribute expertise in **COIL, virtual exchange, global learning, curriculum internationalization, and faculty development**, supporting initiatives and resources that advance international and intercultural competencies in higher education.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

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### **European Developing Across Differences (DAD) Learning Lab & Community Week**

Groningen, Netherlands – July 2023

- Volunteered in the DAD Learning Lab & Community Week, supporting event logistics, assisting faculty, and contributing to evening programming.
- Completed mandatory training and debriefing, ensuring the success of the event and enriching the learning experience for participants.